

Kurume History Walks

No.16 Former Mishima Family Gate Kyu Mishimake Nagayamon 旧三島家長屋門

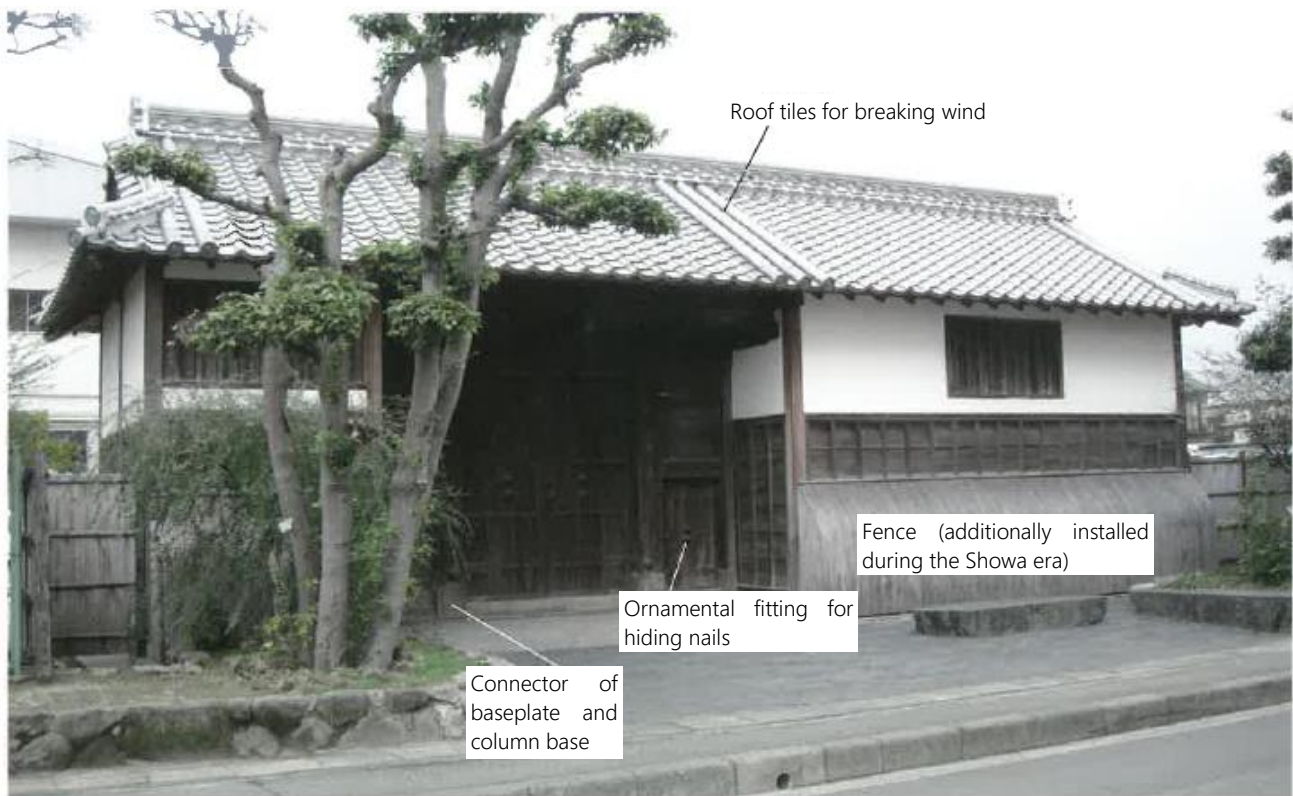
This number introduces the gate located at the Sasayama elementary school.

Originally, it was built for a samurai residence of the Kajimura family near the current city hall. For some reasons, the Mishima family became the owner of the residence and its land around the 1900s, and maintained them for over ninety years.

On July 23rd, 2001, it was designated a Municipal Cultural Property under the name of “the Former Mishima Family Gate”.

This gate (12.5 meters by 4 meters) is a “row house gate (*nagaya mon* 長屋門)” with rooms on its sides. This type of gate is often built for castles or samurai residences.

Its construction year was unknown. But while dismantling and reassembling to the current place, we found an inscription on a pillar: “Built in 1840 by Mimaki Ichzaemon (a purveyor of the carpenter to the Kurume Domain)”.



Former Mishima Family Gate at the Sasayama elementary school

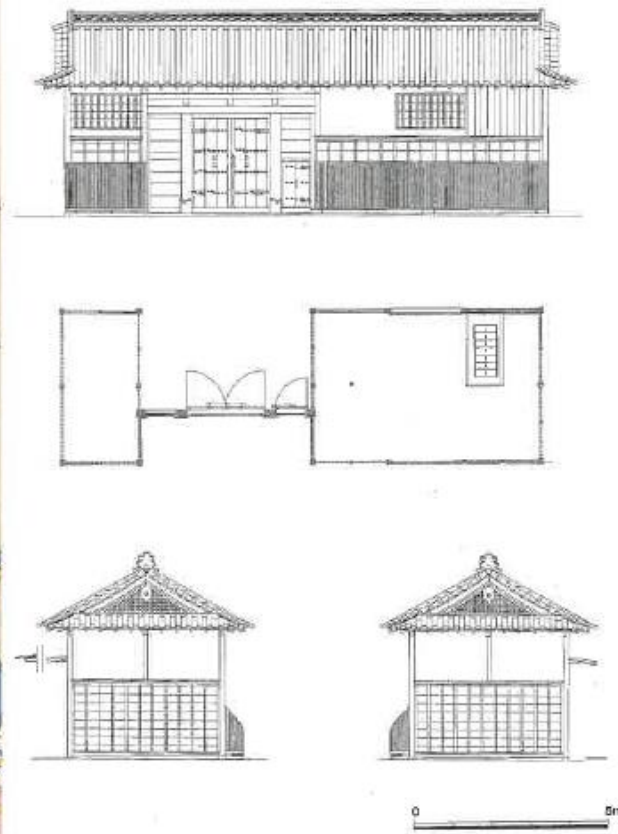
■ History and Structure

The Kajimura family, the original owner of the gate, was in charge of the lord's horse guard in the Edo period. They had the rice stipend 300 *koku**, and their residence inside the outer compound.

Their residence and land came into the hand of the Mishima family in the 1900s. When a road construction was planned to pass through the land in 1917, they moved the gate to the southern side.

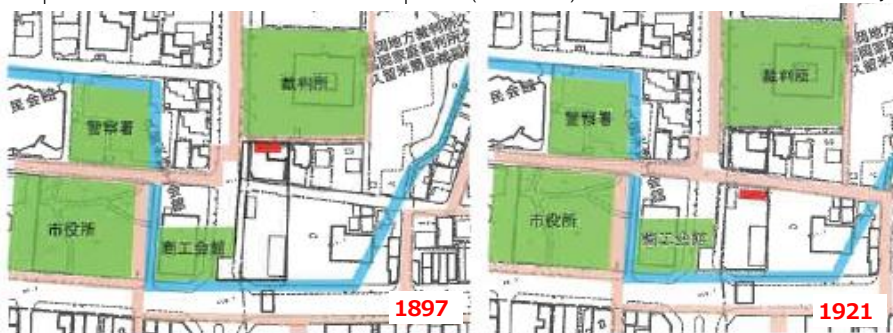
The length of the entire building is 12.52 meters, and the width is 3.986 meters. The entrance is leftward from the front view. There are two rooms: one about 2 meters long on the left, and the other about 6 meters long on the right. We presume that the large one was the gatekeeper's living and that the small one was for storage.

**Koku* 石' was a volume unit for measuring the rice quantity and for evaluating the income of a samurai in feudal Japan. One *koku* is about 180 liters of rice, enough to support one person for a single year.



Map of the castle and the town in the Tenpo era (1830-1843)

Former Mishima Family Gate



The locations of the gate in 1897 and 1921, according to our estimation through the research. The black and white map is the recent one.

■ Other old gates in Kurume

Several old gates exist today. They were originally from Kurume Castle and samurai residences. Most were relocated into temples and reused as main gates.

Each takes a style of *shikyakumon*, *yakuimon*, *karamon* or *roumon*:

-*Shikyakumon* literally means a four-legged gate. These four pillars support the roof. If there are eight, we call it *hakkyakumon* (eight-legged gate).

-*Yakuimon* was often built at samurai residences from around the 13th century to the 15th century.

-*Karamon* literally means the Chinese style gate. The bargeboards are in the shape of an arc.

-*Roumon* is a two-story building gate of the shrine, equipped the veranda on the second story.

The Nichirin-ji Temple at Kyomachi has a *shikyakumon* as the main gate, deriving from the Kurume Castle.

The Myoren-ji Temple at Teramachi uses a *yakuimon* that originally stood at the residence of a chairperson of domain finance. The gate is said to be relocated to the present place at the time when he was punished by seizing assets in 1845.

The Hontai-ji Temple at Teramachi has a *karamon*, which is the oldest among others in the city.

The Juhon-ji Temple at Kusanomachi received a gate of Kurume Castle, which took the style of the *yakuimon*. We consider that it was moved after 1873 when the castle was dismantled.

The Susano-jinja Shrine's *roumon* has elaborate carvings of the mixture of the styles derived from India, China, and Japan.

The photo at the bottom shows a *yakuimon* which does not exist anymore. The Sasaki family owned it at Jonanmachi. During the Edo period (1603-1854), the size and the type of the gate to construct were determined by the status. This gate is ranked as the middle.



Yakuimon of Myoren-ji Temple



Karamon of the Hontai-ji Temple



Yakuimon of the Juhoni-ji Temple



Roumon of the Susano-jinja Shrine



Yakuimon of the Sasaki family

■ Relocation and Restoration

From 2001 to 2002, we carried out relocating and repairing work. The original timbers from 1840 have remained despite many times of the restoration since the first time in 1917. The large part was corroded because of the termite damage, although we repaired them using as large as possible.



- ① Just before the dismantlement. It shows how the gate was.
- ② Damaged pillars because of the termite and the corrosion. We cut off unusable parts and reused them by adding the reinforcement.
- ③ Reinforcement of a mortise with new wood.
- ④ Raising the framework. It is distinguishable between the reused timbers (brown) and the new (beige).
- ⑤ This bamboo lattice is the foundation of the earth wall.
- ⑥ The wall covered with clay.
- ⑦ We found the inscription on wood during the dismantlement. This made clear the construction period (1840) and the carpenter (Mimaki Ichizemon, a purveyor to the Kurume Domain)



Today, we use one room of the gate to show the pictures of the relocation and restoration works, the original roof tiles, the nails, and the metal fittings. For visiting the room, please contact us.

This number is edited by reference to the festschrift of the late Professor Miyamoto Tatsuo.

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